AI-Enhanced self-oriented English learning for diverse skill development in Japan

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The recent introduction of advanced generative AI has had a noticeable impact on many fields, including higher education language learning. This offers new opportunities, including personalized learning experiences tailored to individual students'needs, around-the-clock accessibility, immediate feedback mechanisms, and adaptive content delivery to enhance learning outcomes. However, in Japan's predominantly test-oriented and teacher-centered context of English education, students have limited opportunities to leverage AI technology to develop diverse skills necessary for future careers. The learning is often passive and focused on memorization, understanding, and testing, while skills like analysis, evaluation, and creativity are also crucial. Therefore, we propose an AI-enhanced language teaching method that offers avenues for developing higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) like analysis, evaluation, and creation in English, along with lower-order thinking skills (LOTS), as delineated by the revised Bloom's taxonomy (2001) for educational goals. While improving LOTS is easier in regular classes through passive learning, learning HOTS needs deeper engagement and critical thinking. For example, developing HOTS necessitates activities like synthesizing information and presenting appropriate solutions. Through AI-integrated learning, students could enhance their ability to analyze and evaluate the outcomes generated by AI, create and expand their knowledge, and develop language competency. The proposed method also leads to tailored learning at students'English levels and personal interests, which further boosts learning. After attaining a certain level of HOTS and confidence, students can apply the learning outcomes to academic and career-based settings. While AI-integrated language teaching raises concerns about limited human interaction, privacy issues, algorithm bias, and accessibility challenges, it offers benefits within the context of Japanese higher education. By providing a safe and non-judgmental environment, AI-powered language learning helps mitigate communication barriers and foster student confidence, overcoming hierarchical constraints from English classrooms. Ultimately, this aids the digitalization of the Japanese education system and creating global human resources.

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